

2.7 Religious Education and Other Curriculum Areas

Because it articulates intentionally the connectedness of the human person with the whole of reality, human and divine, Religious Education awakens all disciplines of learning to their deep potential. It lies at the heart of the curriculum of Catholic Schools, synthesizing, enriching and complementing the learning experiences of students.

Every curriculum area or subject that is taught within a Catholic school has a religious dimension, a capacity to assist students to examine the world of human culture and the world of religious meaning, providing knowledge and skills, and fostering attitudes and values that are life-giving and that assist young people to search for meaning and truth.



Religious Education 'should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority; it should also seek appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material so that there is a coordination between human learning and religious awareness. Like other coursework, it should promote culture, and it should make use of the best educational methods available to schools today.'

(The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n. 70)

Inter-disciplinary links between Religious Education and other curriculum areas are a vital means of engaging students with the Catholic world-view described earlier. They are also a means of making available the insights, understandings and values derived from the Gospel to the public discourse of society.

Individual curriculum areas find their place in the religious aims of the Catholic school when they foster:

- skills such as reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, analysis and discernment – all of which promote the search for truth and meaning
- a moral sensitivity and a heightened capacity to distinguish between what is life-promoting and what is dangerous to human and natural
- the gospel values of love, compassion, reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope
- a generosity of spirit that calls forth a commitment to the service of others and of creation generally
- the capacity to bring the perspective of the Gospel into conversation with the surrounding culture – to reflect, to judge and to choose and to act.

The *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* mandated by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provide a framework for the development of whole school curriculum that intentionally addresses the various dimensions of the human person. This framework seeks to develop in learners the knowledge, skills and behaviours appropriate to three interconnecting strands of learning: physical, personal and social learning; discipline-based learning; and inter-disciplinary learning.

Each of these strands has its proper and autonomous contribution to make to the development of the whole person. And because of this aim, each strand and each curriculum area already implies a religious dimension. It is the task of religious educators to assist all curriculum areas to recognise and explore the religious dimension proper to them, while ensuring that the distinctive content and purpose of classroom Religious Education is not lost.

The challenge to leaders in Catholic schools is to consider innovative approaches to curriculum development whereby teachers can be helped to explore the religious dimension of each area in relation to its own operation and to the curriculum as a whole.

The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12

1. The learning environment is supportive and productive
2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation
3. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program
4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
5. Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning
6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom

"The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered." (The Catholic School n 39)